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## **New Year's Eve celebrations can quickly turn from magic to tragic, warn doctors and police**

By [Jay R. Jordan](#)

By midnight Monday, the Houston sky will likely be filled with dazzling fireworks. But bottle rockets, bullets and booze could turn the celebration from magic to tragic. With 2019 fast approaching, authorities are hoping Houstonians will slow down and remember to be safe during the long weekend.

Drinking and driving, fireworks and guns – all of which (for whatever reason) are associated with New Year's Eve celebrations – are what officials hope people will think twice about as we kiss 2018 goodbye.

Year after year, Dr. Pablo Tovar, medical director for Ben Taub Emergency Department, helps treat patients injured in drunk driving crashes.

"It's incredibly difficult to see something like that, especially knowing that these are most definitely preventable," Tovar said. "The decisions we make can have long-term effects, not just on ourselves but those who we love."

Tovar, as well as Houston law enforcement, urged Houstonians to be responsible when ringing in the new year by delegating a designated driver or using a ride-share, such as Lyft.

Shooting guns and rifles into the air is also a tradition that can have deadly consequences. Celebratory gunfire [killed a Houston man in 2015](#) after a bullet shot into the air careened back to the ground, hitting him in the head.

"Whatever goes up must come down," Acevedo said in a video posted to Twitter. "Every year across our country, we see tragedy from innocent people being struck by celebratory gunfire. Not only is it illegal, not only is it dangerous, it's irresponsible (and) immoral."

Fireworks also tend to be an injurious celebration on New Year's Eve, Tovar said.

"Fireworks come with their own set of dangers," Tovar said.

There are obvious dangers with the explosive properties of fireworks, but Tovar pointed out how sparklers can cause burns to users and could even have incendiary properties.

Fireworks can also cause eye damage, Tovar said, a common but not well-known danger.

"It's really sad to see somebody who was previously seeing just fine," Tovar said. "From one day to the next, starting the new year, they're potentially blind in both of their eyes."

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Houston-doctor-law-enforcement-recommends-safety-13496397.php>